

[Case History]

Beliefs and Customs - Folk Stuff

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview 19

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

JUN 19 1939

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Vivian Morris

ADDRESS 225 West 130 Street

DATE June 6, 1939

SUBJECT CASE HISTORY (Harlem Hospital)

1. Date and time of interview
2. Place of interview
3. Name and address of informant
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

Library of Congress

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Vivian Morris

ADDRESS 225 West 130 Street

DATE June 6, 1939

SUBJECT CASE HISTORY (Harlem Hospital)

Not that she wasn't convinced, but that she was non-plussed. She verified her puzzled headshaking with an almost wistful string of: "No, no, no." The woman sat down on the opposite bench, looked around and made general complaints to the general public within hearing. Possibly this general public thought she was a little "off", or possibly just another of those "sorry" cases that filled the waiting rooms of the Harlem Hospital, because those who heard her looked and didn't stop. The nurses simply didn't look. The woman caught my eye, and considering me an audience, pegged me with her conversation.

"O, Lawd, how I feels bad! I can't make out how I evuh come t' see daylight agin. Thought I wuz done fo' this time. Thought I'd nevuh git up. No, mam, thought I wuz gone fur good now. Ain' been wukkin fur years now exceptin' on odd n' end jobs. Cleanin' wuk an' cookin' wuk. I been feelin' sick fum my rheumatism fur so long an' it's been worse all th'

Library of Congress

time. I picks up a job cleanin' las' week. Benn sick when I took it, but I hadda take it. I wuks through th' day feelin' in pain an' faint. Then I git home t' fix up my house an' then it happens. Listen, I ain' no bad woman. No, mam, I nevuh drinks. So help me Lawd, I nevuh takes a little drink. They foun' me lyin' ona floor unconscious. I can't remembuh much but I does remembuh my gittin' up ona ladder, all th' way up about 8 feet 2 so's to take a valise down, an' then I feels faint an' falls. Lawd, wuz I there stretched out! Stretched out as large as life. No, mam, don' think I hadda drink. I ain' no drinkin' woman. — Sumbody foun, me sprawlin' an' unconscious. I wuz hurt plenty. See, mam, I'se hurt here ona side, and aroun' my waist. — Sure I been here befo'. I comes on Wednesday all weak an' sick an' wuz tol' its too late. Here I wuz sick an' in pain an' they says no. Same thing an Thursday. I ain' got no treatment as yit. Third time I been here. Yuh shoulda heard how they talks t' me aroun' here. No respect fur age or illness. Y' comes an' gits cut up an' yelled at an' y' goes home. — O, Lawd! Trouble wit'em is they don't know Jesus. If they did they wouldn' ack like they does. Jus' like a lotta cattle they acks t' us poor cullud folks. — Them white folks in nis hospital is gittin' nasty. I don't say nuthin' against white folks in gen'ral. I likes em all — cullud an' white n' they makes no diff'rence t' me. Only if they's kind n' got Jesus teachin'. I wukked 15 years fur a gentleman in Charlotte, No'th Carolina. He wuz good t' me an' my daughter an' he built us a house nexta his. That's nice. But they's many that ain' nice. O, Lawdy me! Them that hires cleaners an' cooks an' servants. They ain' so nice, no mam. They wuks yuh t' death like you ain, no human. See whut's happened t' me. Me fallin' in a faint. An' I ain' nevvuh had a drink, mam. I tell yuh agin I'm a hard wukkin' woman. I'm a good woman. So help me Lawd. It pains me all aron' here. An' I ain' nevvuh took nuthin'. 'At's whut/ they seems t' think aroun' here. A little mo' of Jesus is whut's needed. Mo' of His teachin' in their hearts. We black folks always have suffuhed evvuh since I kin think back. We always have sufferin' wit' us. — Whut kin we do, huh? I don' like t' be talked to this way. I'm good an' clean an' God-fearin' an' I nevuh takes t' anythin' 'at's bad. Leastwise drinkin'. I tells yuh th' God-hones' fact. — Lady, take me ovuh to th' desk, please. Yuh kind an' bless yuh. — Take care a yuhself.